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ABSTRACT

The attitudes of high school graduates toward their high school English language arts program were surveyed in a study designed to evaluate and to help improve the senior high programs of a public school district. The 480 respondents, 80 graduates of two high schools randomly selected from each of six graduating classes (1973 through 1979), completed a questionnaire that elicited information on choice of classes, and satisfaction with preparation in the different areas of English instruction. They were also asked to indicate what they thought could be done to improve the language arts program. While no definitive conclusions were drawn from the data, the responses were made available to the faculty for their evaluation. Interest, level of difficulty, and academic need were the most significant criteria in student choice of English classes. Graduates consistently rated their preparation in reading and in writing above average. The respondents also gave a general vote of confidence to the effectiveness of the total English language arts program, praising teachers for their dedication. However, a high percentage felt that writing/grammar instruction should receive more emphasis than it had received while the respondents were in school. (Appendixes include the questionnaire materials.) (HTH)

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A REPORT ON THE ATTITUDES OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES TOWARD THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM

GRADUATING CLASSES

OF

1973	1977
1975	1978
1976	1979

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BY

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ROCHESTER, MINNESOTA
1980

SINCERE APPRECIATION

To those individuals who helped in developing the questionnaire, administering the survey, and tabulating the results. Special appreciation is extended to the graduates who participated in this study.

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Statement of Philosophy and Goals Adopted by the Rochester Public Schools

1. Develop intellectual curiosity and a positive attitude toward learning.
2. Master basic skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
3. Master basic skills in mathematics.
4. Develop the ability to think creatively, logically, and critically.
5. Develop an appreciation and respect for the worth and dignity of every individual.
6. Develop an awareness and understanding of people of other races, creeds, nations, and cultures.
7. Develop an appreciation of the American heritage and an understanding of the role of citizens in a democracy.
8. Develop a feeling of student pride in achievement and progress.
9. Develop the student's feeling of positive self-worth, security, and self-assurance.
10. Develop an appreciation of fine arts including music, art, and literature.
11. Develop an understanding of the world in which we live and the physical laws which govern it.
12. Develop a concern for the conservation of natural and human resources and the preservation of man's environment.
13. Develop an understanding of good physical health and well being.
14. Develop abilities and interests which will lead to a productive future.
15. Develop the ability to use tools, techniques, and strategies of learning.

TITLE IX POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of School District 535, Rochester, Minnesota, to comply with federal and state law prohibiting discrimination and all requirements imposed by or pursuant to regulations issued thereto, to the end that no person in District 535 shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sex, marital status, age, status with regard to public assistance, or disability to be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity, or in employment, or recruitment, consideration, or selection, therefor, whether full time or part time, under an educational program or activity for which the school is responsible.

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

An important part of the school program is an evaluation of that program in terms of its effectiveness in achieving stated objectives. Typically, schools approach this evaluation process by administering standardized or locally developed tests. Program evaluation has been limited, therefore, to the measurement of student performance during the years when the students are in school--"on the assembly line" of learning. Seldom does a school system conduct a systematic and detailed assessment of its program by asking its graduates--the "products of the learning-assembly line"--to evaluate their educational training.

Indeed, it is the graduates themselves who offer a special perspective of and insight into the question of how well they were prepared to assume the responsibilities encountered after high school graduation. Meeting many of these responsibilities requires the use of effective communication skills developed not only in English language arts classrooms, but throughout the entire school curriculum.

Over the past two decades our society has undergone many changes. One crisis has followed another. Students were as seriously affected as their parents by the turbulence of the 1960s and '70s. Institutions of learning mirrored clearly the disconsolate spirit of protest, restlessness, and violence taking place across America. The onset of the rock and drug culture; protests against racism, war, and the repressiveness of the adult majority; "cool" and "in" trends in dance, music, dress styles, sexual mores, and language; equal rights for all races and both sexes; Watergate; social and political upheaval produced by the tragedies of Vietnam, Kent State, and the assassination of national leaders: the culminating effect of these events is clearly shown in the values, attitudes, and vision of America's youth today.

Both college and high school students collectively flexed their muscle in demanding rights; parents and schools acquisced by relaxing standards in dress, conduct ... and scholarship. Students became involved in shaping school policy and determining the content of the curriculum. Courses became "relevant"; students had choices in selecting their courses; teachers and professors modified their approach to learning. The "traditions" in education were often sacrificed for the new wave of "relevance" in content and instruction.

Today's scene in this country, as well as throughout the world, is significantly different from that of the 1960s and '70s, when the graduates surveyed for this report entered kindergarten and passed through our classes. Schools have conscientiously attempted to respond to these changes through extensive and continual revisions of their program. The subject-matter of English, for example, was redefined in content and process in an attempt to respond to the changing values, attitudes, needs, and interests of both students and adults. Although Rochester's English language arts staff was no exception in modifying its curriculum over the past twenty years, it cautiously moderated its program: the staff avoided the more popular crazes of "relevance" and totally "open" electives by maintaining a reasonable balance between program requirements and student choices in course selection. The staff refused to succumb to the popular trend of "anything goes, as long as it's relevant--ya know what I mean?"

The results of this study, as well as other data from tests, research, and developments in the field, will help the English language arts staff to improve its curriculum--to alter priorities and program design, where necessary; to maintain or emphasize those features and practices deemed desirable by graduates; and to summon the resources necessary for maintaining a quality educational program.

The value of this study can be measured, in part, by the impact it has on the educational program of children who are now entering school and will graduate shortly before the turn of this century. The challenge confronting schools today is awesome; the responsibility, even greater. The insights which graduates have offered in this survey will help this school district meet both the challenges and responsibilities of offering the best possible education for all students.

Jerry D. Reynolds
English Language Arts Consultant
Rochester Public Schools

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to evaluate and, ultimately, to improve the senior high school English language arts program of the Rochester Public School District by conducting a survey of its graduates to discover their attitudes of how effectively this program prepared them for their experiences beyond high school. English language arts teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators are genuinely interested in knowing how successful the schools have been in helping students develop skills and understanding in the language arts.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The Sample: The sample used in this survey was drawn from the graduating classes of 1973, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, and 1979 of John Marshall High School and Mayo High School. Eighty (80) graduates (forty from each high school) were randomly selected from each of the six graduating classes: a total of 480 graduates. The methods used conform to a modified probability sample of all graduates in the six graduating classes. The graduates of 1974 were purposefully omitted because of their participation in a follow-up study a year earlier. A detailed description of the sample, with reference to sex, education, and present activity, is included at the end of this report.

The Procedure: After the questionnaire had been developed and revised, and the probability sample determined, the first letter, questionnaire, and self-addressed, stamped envelope were sent to the 480 graduates on April 7, 1980. A second letter, questionnaire, and self-addressed, stamped envelope were sent on May 7, 1980, to those graduates who did not respond to the first letter. Addresses were carefully checked and telephone calls were made to ensure the best return possible. Returned questionnaires were accepted until July 7, 1980--three months after the first mailing. The nature of this questionnaire required that it be completed in writing and returned. Graduates were not allowed to give their responses over the phone when they were called and encouraged to return their questionnaire. The relatively high percentage of returns--76%--lends to the reliability of the results of this study. Copies of the questionnaire and letters sent to the graduates are included in the appendices of this report.

The Report: A table of results follows each of the questions used in the questionnaire. Under each table are several observations about the results shown in the table. The intent, however, was not to draw conclusions based upon the data. The readers are left to draw their own conclusions. The reporting of results has purposely been simplified for clarity and ease in interpretation. Individuals who are interested in more detailed data should contact the English Language Arts Consultant. Every effort has been made to ensure the anonymity of the respondents to this questionnaire.

Statistical Variations: Readers should understand that there will be statistical variations in this report, particularly in those cases where graduates could select more than one response or did not respond to a particular question. Likewise, because percentages and composite ratings were rounded to the nearest tenth or full percentage point, depending on the question, totals will fall short of or exceed 100% in some cases. However, the intent is to report the results as accurately and clearly as possible.

HOW DO STUDENTS SELECT THEIR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS COURSES?

In the early '70s the English language arts staff developed, piloted, and implemented a curriculum which offered students a number of choices among a variety of one-semester courses, but which required certain basic courses and skill development of all students. Students are required to take three years of English in senior high school. Since most English courses are one semester in length, students generally enroll in six different courses during high school. All students are required to complete satisfactorily the one-semester English Explorations course in tenth grade, a one-semester speech/drama course taken in ninth or tenth grade, and a one-semester written composition course, generally taken in the eleventh grade. In meeting the remainder of their English requirement for graduation, students have the opportunity to select courses from a list of over twenty one-semester offerings. Please refer to the Appendices for a listing of these courses and a description of the program.

The staff is interested in learning how students select their English courses. Even though the students are required to take English each year, they have a number of options open to them in meeting graduation requirements.

Question

In high school you were required to take English every semester, but you were allowed to choose your courses from a list of many offerings. How did you choose your English elective courses? (Check the appropriate item(s).)

( ) a. Need
( ) b. Interest
( ) c. Level of DIFFICULTY
( ) d. Friends were choosing the course
( ) e. Recommendation from counselor
( ) f. Recommendation from teacher
( ) g. Recommendation from parents
( ) h. What teacher was teaching the course

	Class of 1973	Class of 1975	Class of 1976	Class of 1977	Class of 1978	Class of 1979	COMPOSITE
a. Need	11%	14%	12%	13%	13%	14%	13%
b. Interest	53%	42%	43%	47%	39%	36%	42%
c. Level of DIFFICULTY	10%	9%	15%	13%	16%	23%	15%
d. Friends were choosing the course	4%	11%	5%	5%	9%	6%	7%
e. Recommendation from counselor	8%	7%	2%	9%	3%	4%	5%
f. Recommendation from teacher	4%	6%	7%	2%	7%	6%	5%
g. Recommendation from parents	1%	2%	2%	4%	5%	2%	3%
h. What teacher was teaching the course	9%	9%	13%	7%	8%	9%	9%

Observations

1. Although there is some variation among the responses of the six graduating classes, a majority of graduates feel that they chose their English courses because of their interest in particular courses. The items of "level of difficulty" and "need," though significantly lower than "interest," were commonly identified as important factors affecting student choice.

2. Since the graduates were allowed to select more than one response to this question, the total percentage of responses still represents approximately 100%, though the actual number of responses far exceeds the number of graduates. Many graduates checked two or more responses.

3. It is significant to note that although students are to share a registration booklet with their parents when they discuss course registrations for the following year, only 3% of the graduates checked the item indicating that they selected courses according to the recommendation of their parents. The registration process now requires that parents approve the course selections made by their sons and daughters.

4. Two of the major purposes of the "elective English program" implemented a decade ago were to allow students to select some courses according to interest and to build the basic communication skills into each course. Although some attrition has occurred over seven years in terms of the percentage of students who select their courses in terms of "interest," this factor remains the primary criterion for students in their selection of English courses.

5. The chart indicates an irregular but overall increase from 1973 to 1979 in the percentage of graduates who said that they selected courses according to the level of difficulty. In fact, nearly a quarter of the 1979 graduates checked this response, and only slightly over one-third of them checked "interest" as the reason for their course selections.

DO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS CHOOSE ENGLISH COURSES APPROPRIATE TO THEIR NEEDS AND ABILITIES?

One of the major concerns of parents, teachers, and post secondary school personnel when elective English programs were begun in the late '60s was that high school students were incapable of making wise choices when they selected their English courses. Many individuals felt that when given the opportunity, students would select the easier or "fun" courses, rather than offerings appropriate to a student's ability and vocational plans. For this reason, the following question was asked of the graduates, whose responses are reported according to whether the graduates attended college. ("Attended college" means only that the graduates attended college.)

Question

Based on your own experience, do high school students choose English courses appropriate to their needs and abilities?

( ) a. Yes
( ) b. No

	Class of 1973	Class of 1975	Class of 1976	Class of 1977	Class of 1978	Class of 1979	COMPOSITE
Graduates who attended college							
a. Yes	44%	36%	37%	36%	39%	49%	40%
b. No	53%	61%	59%	62%	61%	46%	57%
Graduates who did not attend college							
a. Yes	47%	44%	43%	62%	76%	36%	52%
b. No	53%	56%	57%	38%	24%	64%	48%
All graduates							
a. Yes	45%	40%	38%	47%	51%	44%	44%
b. No	53%	59%	58%	51%	49%	53%	54%

Observations

1. This study shows that a slight majority of the graduates feel that high school students do not choose English courses appropriate to their needs and abilities. However, with the exception of the 1973 class, this report shows a rather steady increase of "Yes" responses of graduates who attended college. In fact, the trend culminates with the 1979 class, of which over half of the respondents who attended college answered "Yes" to this question.

2. The percentages for each class do not total 100% because some graduates did not answer this question. The composite percentage, however, is 98% because it represents a "weighted average."

3. No consistent pattern exists with graduates who did not attend college. Overall, a slight majority of these graduates, however, believe that students choose courses appropriate to their needs and abilities.

4. In light of the responses to this question, it would appear that there is some justification for the concern of those individuals who believe that students, when given the opportunity, do not choose appropriate English courses. However, as shown clearly by the results in the next table, graduates contend that students should still be allowed to choose their English courses.

SHOULD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS BE ALLOWED TO CHOOSE THEIR ENGLISH COURSES?

In fairness to the interpretation of the preceding table, the reader should consider it within the context of the following table, the implications of which are equally significant.

Question

Do you think students should be allowed to choose their English courses?

( ) a. Yes
( ) b. No

	Class of 1973	Class of 1975	Class of 1976	Class of 1977	Class of 1978	Class of 1979	COMPOSITE
Graduates who attended college							
a. Yes	59%	70%	72%	79%	80%	92%	76%
b. No	38%	27%	26%	21%	18%	0%	21%
Graduates who did not attend college							
a. Yes	100%	80%	93%	90%	86%	96%	90%
b. No	0%	16%	7%	10%	14%	4%	9%
All Graduates							
a. Yes	75%	76%	77%	84%	82%	94%	81%
b. No	24%	22%	22%	16%	17%	2%	17%

Observations

1. Although a slight majority of the graduates feel that students do not choose English courses appropriate to their needs and abilities, 81% of the graduates believe that students should be allowed to choose their English courses. This feeling is shared by both groups of graduates--those who attended college, as well as those who did not go on to college.

2. The percentages for each class do not total 100% for the same reason given in Observation #2 of the preceding table. For example, 8% of the 1979 graduates who attended college did not answer this question.

3. From 1973 to 1979, an increasingly larger percentage of graduates who attended college supported the policy that students should be allowed to choose their English courses. This trend consistently builds to the 1979 graduates who attended college, 92% of whom endorsed this policy.

4. Even the oldest graduates--those who have completed college, who have been gainfully employed for a number of years, and/or who are now parents--support the philosphy that students should increasingly assume greater responsibility for their own learning and for the consequences of their decisions. It is also important to remember that although the overall structure of the English curriculum, from 1973 through the present, allows students to choose some of their courses, about half of the students' program is devoted to required courses.

5. The graduates who did not attend college consistently demonstrated even greater support of this approach than their fellow graduates who went on to college.

6. Since the elective program was inaugurated, the staff has made a conscientious effort each year to improve the procedure of helping students make wise course selections. As implied by the results shown in this table, students welcome both the opportunity to choose their courses and the guidance given them in the registration process.

HOW DO GRADUATES RATE THEIR HIGH SCHOOL PREPARATION IN THE DIFFERENT AREAS OF ENGLISH?

Schools are supposedly returning to the "basics"--if, indeed, they ever left the teaching of such basics as reading, writing, and arithmetic. During the years when schools were implementing innovative English programs, many critics felt that the "basic skills" were being ignored and replaced by "frills" and other activities which did not develop fundamental learning skills. The 1973 graduates in this survey began high school in 1970--approximately when the English curriculum was beginning to undergo change. Also, the 1973 graduates began kindergarten in the early '60s, entered the secondary schools in the mid '60s--a period characterized by a more traditional school curriculum, which historically was believed to have emphasized the "basics."

If graduates believe that their education lacked "basic skill" instruction, English teachers are as interested as any other group in correcting this weakness. However, rather than assuming that graduates believe they are ill-equipped in the "basics," the staff wanted evidence from the graduates themselves. Consequently, this survey asked our graduates to rate their high school preparation in seven basic areas of English. They rated each area on a five-point scale, from "strong" to "weak." The results of each area have been compiled and reported in two ways: the average point rating for each class, and the percentage of respondents who selected each of the five ratings.

Question

How would you rate your high school preparation in each of the following areas? Compare your preparation with that of graduates in your field or activity. (Circle the appropriate number for each item.)	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK
a. Reading	5	4	3	2	1
b. Writing	5	4	3	2	1
c. Speaking	5	4	3	2	1
d. Listening	5	4	3	2	1
e. Spelling	5	4	3	2	1
f. Literature	5	4	3	2	1
g. Grammar and Usage	5	4	3	2	1

READING

Average Point Ratings

	Class of 1973	Class of 1975	Class of 1976	Class of 1977	Class of 1978	Class of 1979	COMPOSITE
Graduates who attended college	3.8	3.9	3.7	3.8	4.0	3.6	3.8
Graduates who did not attend college	3.3	3.8	3.4	3.9	3.7	3.6	3.7
All graduates	3.6	3.9	3.6	3.8	3.9	3.6	3.7

Percentage of Respondents Who Selected Each Rating

The percentages will total approximately 100% for each of the three groups of graduates.

	Class of 1973					Class of 1975					Class of 1976					Class of 1977					Class of 1978					Class of 1979					COMPOSITE				
	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Graduates who attended college	28%	34%	28%	6%	3%	21%	55%	18%	6%	0%	26%	35%	24%	13%	2%	26%	31%	41%	3%	0%	43%	23%	27%	7%	0%	22%	41%	22%	14%	3%	28%	36%	27%	8%	1%
Graduates who did not attend college	16%	21%	47%	5%	11%	36%	12%	44%	4%	0%	29%	14%	29%	21%	7%	38%	24%	24%	14%	0%	19%	29%	52%	0%	0%	20%	28%	44%	8%	0%	27%	27%	40%	6%	2%
All graduates	24%	29%	35%	6%	6%	28%	36%	29%	5%	0%	27%	30%	25%	15%	3%	31%	28%	34%	7%	0%	35%	25%	35%	5%	0%	21%	35%	31%	11%	2%	28%	30%	32%	8%	2%

Observations

1. Our graduates consistently rated their preparation in reading as clearly above average--a composite rating of 3.7, or between the "strong" and "average" ratings. Although the ratings fluctuate slightly by class and by graduates who attended college or did not attend college, the composite never slipped below 3.6.

2. Approximately 28% of the graduates rated their preparation in reading as "strong," 58% of the graduates rated their training in reading as above average, and 90% of the graduates considered their high school preparation in reading as average or above average.

3. A relatively small percentage of graduates rated their preparation in reading as below average: 8% rated it "2," and only 2% rated it "1" or "weak."

4. Ironically, the highest ratings came from the classes of 1975 and 1978, the period of time when the public was demanding a return to the basic skills.

WRITING

Average Point Ratings

	Class of 1973	Class of 1975	Class of 1976	Class of 1977	Class of 1978	Class of 1979	COMPOSITE
Graduates who attended college	3.5	3.5	3.2	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.5
Graduates who did not attend college	3.1	3.4	3.1	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.4
All graduates	3.4	3.4	3.2	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.5

Percentage of Respondents Who Selected Each Rating

The percentages will total approximately 100% for each of the three groups of graduates.

	Class of 1973					Class of 1975					Class of 1976					Class of 1977					Class of 1978					Class of 1979					COMPOSITE				
	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Graduates who attended college	16%	34%	34%	9%	3%	15%	30%	21%	24%	0%	11%	30%	33%	17%	9%	23%	18%	44%	13%	3%	18%	39%	31%	5%	7%	32%	24%	32%	5%	5%	19%	31%	33%	12%	5%
Graduates who did not attend college	8%	26%	42%	26%	0	20%	12%	56%	4%	4%	0%	21%	64%	14%	0%	28%	21%	45%	7%	0%	14%	29%	52%	5%	0%	16%	30%	32%	12%	4%	16%	24%	47%	11%	2%
All graduates	12%	31%	37%	16%	2%	17%	28%	36%	16%	2%	8%	28%	40%	17%	7%	25%	19%	44%	10%	1%	17%	35%	38%	5%	5%	26%	29%	32%	8%	5%	18%	28%	38%	12%	4%

Observations

1. Regardless of the clamor which began in 1975 that Johnny can't write, Johnny and Susie in Rochester consistently rated their preparation in writing as above average, whether they attended college or not. The composite rating was 3.5, with 84% of the graduates rating their preparation as average or above average.

2. About 2 out of 10 graduates rated their training in writing as "strong," about 5 out of 10 graduates rated their training in writing skills as above average, and slightly more than 8 out of 10 graduates gave average or above average marks to their preparation in written composition.

3. The graduates who did not attend college rated their preparation in writing, as well as in reading, slightly lower than did the graduates who went on to college.

4. Later in this survey, graduates were again asked to rate their preparation in writing. Asking the graduates two similar questions provided a basis to check consistency in response and to ensure a greater degree of reliability in this report. Although slight differences occur in response among classes and groups, the statistical difference is slight.

SPEAKING

Average Point Ratings

	Class of 1973	Class of 1975	Class of 1976	Class of 1977	Class of 1978	Class of 1979	COMPOSITE
Graduates who attended college	2.9	3.4	3.0	3.6	3.6	3.4	3.3
Graduates who did not attend college	2.9	3.2	2.9	3.3	3.3	3.1	3.2
All graduates	2.9	3.3	3.0	3.5	3.5	3.3	3.3

Percentage of Respondents Who Selected Each Rating

The percentages will total approximately 100% for each of the three groups of graduates.

	Class of 1973					Class of 1975					Class of 1976					Class of 1977					Class of 1978					Class of 1979					COMPOSITE				
	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Graduates who attended college	9%	9%	50%	22%	6%	21%	27%	30%	15%	6%	7%	24%	41%	20%	9%	18%	31%	44%	6%	0%	18%	34%	32%	14%	0%	19%	22%	43%	11%	5%	15%	25%	40%	15%	4%
Graduates who did not attend college	5%	21%	47%	16%	11%	12%	20%	44%	16%	4%	0%	36%	36%	14%	14%	21%	24%	28%	24%	3%	14%	14%	62%	5%	5%	4%	32%	36%	24%	4%	11%	24%	41%	17%	6%
All graduates	8%	14%	49%	20%	8%	17%	24%	36%	16%	5%	5%	27%	40%	18%	10%	19%	28%	37%	15%	1%	17%	28%	42%	11%	2%	13%	26%	40%	16%	5%	13%	25%	40%	16%	5%

Observations

1. With the exception of the 1973 graduating class, the average point ratings given by the graduating classes for their training in oral communication skills are average or above average. However, the point ratings for speaking skills are slightly lower than those for reading and writing skills. Ironically, the second most commonly used communication skill--speech--is often excluded from the list of "basic" skills.

2. Slightly more than 1 out of 10 graduates rated their speech training as "strong," about 4 out of 10 graduates considered their training in speaking skills as above average, and about 8 out of 10 graduates gave average or above average marks to their preparation in oral communication.

3. Prior to the 1977 graduating class, students were not required to take a speech course. As shown by this report, graduates rated their speech training significantly higher after 1976.

4. Graduates who attended college gave a slightly higher rating to their speech preparation than did their counterparts, who did not enter college.

LISTENING

Average Point Ratings

	Class of 1973	Class of 1975	Class of 1976	Class of 1977	Class of 1978	Class of 1979	COMPOSITE
Graduates who attended college	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.9	3.5	3.6
Graduates who did not attend college	3.2	3.5	3.3	3.5	3.5	3.1	3.3
All graduates	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.8	3.4	3.5

Percentage of Respondents Who Selected Each Rating

The percentages will total approximately 100% for each of the three groups of graduates.

	Class of 1973					Class of 1975					Class of 1976					Class of 1977					Class of 1978					Class of 1979					COMPOSITE				
	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Graduates who attended college	19%	34%	31%	13%	0%	18%	30%	36%	15%	0%	13%	39%	30%	13%	4%	18%	31%	41%	8%	3%	30%	36%	27%	7%	0%	22%	30%	35%	5%	8%	20%	34%	33%	10%	3%
Graduates who did not attend college	5%	32%	42%	16%	5%	16%	28%	40%	8%	4%	7%	29%	57%	0%	7%	21%	28%	41%	3%	7%	19%	24%	43%	14%	0%	0%	32%	48%	20%	0%	12%	29%	44%	11%	4%
All graduates	14%	29%	35%	14%	2%	17%	29%	38%	12%	2%	12%	37%	37%	10%	5%	19%	29%	41%	6%	4%	26%	32%	32%	9%	0%	13%	31%	40%	11%	5%	17%	32%	37%	10%	3%

Observations

1. The most commonly used skill in communication--listening--was consistently rated above average by our graduates, as shown in the first table of "Average Point Ratings." (Along with the skill of speaking, listening is too commonly left off the list of "basic" skills.)

2. Approximately 49% of our graduates rated their preparation in listening skills as above average, with only 3% of the graduates rating this area as "weak."

SPELLING

Average Point Ratings

	Class of 1973	Class of 1975	Class of 1976	Class of 1977	Class of 1978	Class of 1979	COMPOSITE
Graduates who attended college	3.5	3.5	3.2	3.3	3.5	3.6	3.4
Graduates who did not attend college	2.7	3.5	3.6	3.3	3.5	3.3	3.3
All graduates	3.2	3.5	3.3	3.3	3.5	3.5	3.4

Percentage of Respondents Who Selected Each Rating

The percentages will total approximately 100% for each of the three groups of graduates.

	Class of 1973					Class of 1975					Class of 1976					Class of 1977					Class of 1978					Class of 1979					COMPOSITE				
	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Graduates who attended college	22	25%	28	19%	3%	21%	18%	52%	9%	0%	13%	28%	33%	13%	11%	18%	18%	46%	15%	3%	25%	34%	18%	14%	9%	27%	32%	24%	11%	5%	21%	26%	33%	15%	6%
Graduates who did not attend college	11%	16%	26	26%	21%	20%	24%	36%	12%	4%	29%	14%	43%	14%	0%	17%	21%	45%	14%	3%	24%	24%	33%	14%	5%	16%	28%	28%	24%	4%	19%	22%	35%	17%	6%
All graduates	18%	22%	27	22%	10	21%	21%	45%	10%	2%	17%	25%	35%	13%	8%	18%	19%	46%	15%	3%	25%	31%	23%	14%	8%	23%	31%	26%	16%	5%	20%	25%	34%	15%	6%

Observations

1. "Students can't spell today." Parents have registered this complaint about schools since the country schools opened. Once high school graduates become parents, they often develop selective memories about their proficiency in spelling when they were students. However, our graduates gave their training in spelling a composite rating of 3.4--clearly above average.

2. The data in this table reflects several differences between the two groups of graduates. For example, as shown in the "Average Point Ratings" table, the graduates of 1973 who did not attend college rated their spelling training as below average, whereas the graduates of the same class who attended college rated their preparation in spelling as 3.5--substantially above average.

3. Whether the graduates went on to college or not, about 20% of them rated their spelling preparation as "strong"; 45% rated their preparation as above average; and 79% rated their training in spelling as average or above, in comparison with other graduates in their field or activity.

4. Only 6% of the graduates gave a "weak" mark to their spelling training, and about 21% rated their spelling preparation as below average.

5. In terms of the composite percentages, there is very little difference in the ratings given by the graduates who attended college and those who did not attend college.

LITERATURE Average Point Ratings	Class of 1973	Class of 1975	Class of 1976	Class of 1977	Class of 1978	Class of 1979	COMPOSITE
Graduates who attended college	3.9	3.8	3.3	3.5	3.5	3.8	3.8
Graduates who did not attend college	2.9	3.3	3.0	3.5	3.2	3.0	3.2
All graduates	3.6	3.6	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.5

Percentage of Respondents Who Selected Each Rating

The percentages will total approximately 100% for each of the three groups of graduates.

	Class of 1973					Class of 1975					Class of 1976					Class of 1977					Class of 1978					Class of 1979					COMPOSITE				
	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Graduates who attended college	28%	44%	25%	3%	0%	18%	45%	36%	0%	0%	9%	30%	48%	11%	2%	15%	38%	33%	10%	3%	14%	43%	30%	9%	5%	38%	22%	30%	8%	3%	19%	37%	34%	7%	2%
Graduates who did not attend college	0%	42%	21%	21%	16%	4%	20%	60%	4%	0%	0%	14%	71%	14%	0%	17%	31%	41%	7%	3%	5%	33%	38%	24%	0%	0%	40%	24%	32%	4%	5%	31%	41%	17%	4%
All graduates	18%	43%	24%	10%	6%	12%	34%	47%	2%	0%	7%	27%	53%	12%	2%	16%	35%	37%	9%	3%	11%	40%	32%	14%	3%	23%	29%	27%	18%	3%	14%	35%	37%	11%	3%

Observations

1. Although both groups of graduates consistently rated their high school preparation in literature as above average (3.5), those graduates who attended college gave a significantly higher rating to this area than did their counterparts. The greatest differences between group ratings occurred with the classes of 1973 and 1979.

2. In terms of the class of 1979, 38% of the graduates who attended college rated their preparation in literature as "strong." However, the graduates who did not attend college responded quite differently--over one third of them rated their preparation in this area as below average.

3. Approximately 14% of the graduates rated their training in literature as "strong," 49% rated their literature preparation as above average, and 86% of the graduates rated the literature program as average or above average.

4. The reader may find it interesting to compare the ratings in literature with those in reading, since the area of literature is one of the major applications of reading skills.

GRAMMAR AND USAGE

Average Point Ratings

	Class of 1973	Class of 1975	Class of 1976	Class of 1977	Class of 1978	Class of 1979	COMPOSITE
Graduates who attended college	3.3	3.1	2.8	3.0	3.3	3.0	3.1
Graduates who did not attend college	2.8	3.3	3.0	3.4	3.2	3.5	3.2
All graduates	3.3	3.2	2.8	3.1	3.3	3.2	3.1

Percentage of Respondents Who Selected Each Rating

The percentages will total approximately 100% for each of the three groups of graduates.

	Class of 1973					Class of 1975					Class of 1976					Class of 1977					Class of 1978					Class of 1979					COMPOSITE				
	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Graduates who attended college	19%	25%	28%	22%	6%	9%	27%	36%	15%	12%	11%	13%	33%	30%	13%	3%	26%	46%	18%	8%	14%	36%	25%	23%	5%	0%	41%	27%	22%	11%	9%	27%	32%	22%	9%
Graduates who did not attend college	5%	21%	17%	21%	16%	8%	24%	56%	8%	0%	0%	21%	57%	21%	0%	17%	31%	31%	14%	7%	10%	24%	48%	19%	0%	8%	44%	32%	12%	0%	9%	29%	42%	15%	4%
All graduates	14%	24%	31%	22%	10%	9%	26%	45%	12%	7%	8%	15%	38%	28%	10%	9%	28%	40%	16%	7%	12%	31%	32%	22%	3%	3%	42%	29%	18%	6%	9%	28%	36%	20%	7%

18 Observations

1. Of the seven areas surveyed in this report, although graduates were the most critical of their preparation in grammar and usage, their composite rating was still 3.1, slightly above average. No pattern exists among the six graduating classes in terms of the ratings given this area.

2. About 1 out of 10 graduates rated their preparation in grammar and usage as "strong," about 4 out of 10 gave an above average mark to their training in this area of English, and a little over 7 out of 10 graduates rated their training in grammar and usage skills as average or above average. However, 1 out of 4 graduates gave a below average mark to their training in grammar and usage.

3. Just as teaching practices and research findings are mixed--or even contradictory at times--in terms of the correlation between the teaching of grammar and its value in learning to write and speak more effectively, so is there a discrepancy in the reactions of graduates to their preparation in grammar and usage, in writing, and in speaking.

HOW DO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES RATE THEIR PREPARATION IN WRITING SKILLS

Earlier in this survey, graduates were asked to rate their high school preparation in the area of writing. They were again asked a similar question to determine whether their preparation in writing skills prepared them for their post high school education and their present job. Moreover, repeating this question provided a basis for checking consistency in response and, therefore, establishing greater reliability of this report.

Question

How well did your high school English courses prepare you in WRITING SKILLS for your post high school education (college, vocational school, on-the-job training) and your present job?

STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK
5	4	3	2	1

Average Point Ratings	Class of 1973	Class of 1975	Class of 1976	Class of 1977	Class of 1978	Class of 1979	COMPOSITE
Graduates who attended college	3.5	3.6	3.1	3.2	3.5	3.7	3.4
Graduates who did not attend college	3.1	3.1	2.8	3.5	3.0	3.3	3.2
All graduates	3.3	3.4	3.0	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.3

Percentage of Respondents Who Selected Each Rating

The percentages will total approximately 100% for each of the three groups of graduates.

	Class of 1973					Class of 1975					Class of 1976					Class of 1977					Class of 1978					Class of 1979					COMPOSITE				
	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Graduates who attended college	16%	47%	22%	6%	13%	15%	48%	18%	15%	3%	13%	22%	35%	22%	9%	15%	18%	44%	18%	5%	18%	41%	25%	9%	7%	29%	37%	17%	9%	9%	17%	34%	27%	13%	7%
Graduates who did not attend college	0%	26%	58%	0%	11%	0%	28%	52%	12%	4%	0%	29%	36%	14%	14%	14%	28%	45%	7%	0%	5%	24%	48%	14%	10%	16%	32%	28%	12%	12%	7%	28%	44%	10%	8%
All graduates	10%	39%	35%	4%	12%	9%	40%	33%	14%	3%	10%	23%	35%	20%	10%	15%	22%	44%	13%	3%	14%	35%	32%	11%	8%	23%	34%	21%	10%	10%	13%	32%	34%	12%	7%

Observations

1. In comparison with their response to a similar question asked earlier in the questionnaire, the graduates rated their preparation in writing skills slightly lower in this question: a composite of 3.5 in the earlier question, and 3.3 in this rating. The difference between the ratings on the two questions was greater among those graduates who did not attend college. However, the overall difference in ratings on the two questions is very slight: the graduates were reasonably consistent in the evaluation of their training in writing.

2. Those graduates who attended college were relatively consistent in their ratings on both questions. For example, the classes of 1973 and 1979 gave the same ratings in each year to both questions (3.5 in 1973, and 3.7 in 1979). The 1979 graduates gave the highest rating of all classes--3.7.

3. Approximately 45% of the graduates rated their training in writing as above average, and about 8 out of 10 graduates rated their training as average or above average. Only 7% of the graduates felt that their preparation in writing was "weak," and about 2 out of 10 graduates rated their training in writing as below average.

4. The graduates of 1979 rated their preparation in writing slightly more favorably than did the 1973 graduates.

5. As shown in other parts of this report, the Class of 1976 gave the lowest rating of all classes--3.0 or just "average."

6. Among the graduates who did not attend college, none of them in the Classes of 1973, 1975, and 1976 gave a "strong" rating to their training in writing. However, the reader will note a significant difference among the same group of graduates in the percentage of "strong" ratings for the last three classes.

HOW DO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES RATE THEIR PREPARATION IN SPEECH SKILLS?

The graduates were also asked two similar questions about their preparation in speech. This procedure helps in determining the degree of reliability of the graduates' responses to the questions in this questionnaire.

Question

How well did your high school SPEECH course(s) prepare you for your post high school education (college, vocational, on-the-job training) and your present job?

STRONG 5 4 AVERAGE 3 2 WEAK 1

Average Point Ratings	Class of 1973	Class of 1975	Class of 1976	Class of 1977	Class of 1978	Class of 1979	COMPOSITE
Graduates who attended college	3.0	3.1	2.5	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.1
Graduates who did not attend college	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.4	3.0	3.2	3.1
All graduates	3.0	3.0	2.6	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.1

Percentage of Respondents Who Selected Each Rating

The percentages will total approximately 100% for each of the three groups of graduates.

	Class of 1973					Class of 1975					Class of 1976					Class of 1977					Class of 1978					Class of 1979					COMPOSITE				
	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Graduates who attended college	9%	13%	38%	19%	6%	12%	12%	33%	12%	9%	0%	11%	30%	33%	11%	15%	28%	41%	13%	0%	16%	30%	41%	9%	5%	14%	30%	27%	16%	8%	11%	21%	35%	17%	6%
Graduates who did not attend college	5%	16%	42%	0%	11%	0%	20%	44%	16%	4%	0%	14%	36%	7%	0%	24%	14%	24%	28%	0%	10%	29%	33%	14%	14%	20%	20%	32%	20%	8%	11%	19%	35%	16%	6%
All graduates	8%	14%	39%	12%	8%	7%	16%	38%	14%	7%	0%	12%	32%	27%	8%	19%	22%	34%	19%	0%	14%	29%	38%	11%	8%	16%	26%	29%	18%	8%	11%	20%	35%	17%	6%

Observations

1. In comparison with their response to an earlier question related to their preparation in speech, the graduates gave a slightly lower rating in response to this question about their speech course(s): a composite of 3.3 in the earlier question, and 3.1 in this rating.

2. Both groups of graduates, those who attended college and those who did not go to college, gave the same overall rating to their speech courses--3.1. The same is true of both groups in terms of their composite percentages.

3. Prior to the 1977 graduating class, students were not required to take a speech or drama course, and very few students had elected such a course. When the requirement was added that effective with the 1977 class, all graduates must satisfactorily complete one semester of speech or drama before graduation, they rated their preparation in speech much higher.

4. Approximately 42% of the 1979 graduates rated their speech preparation as above average, and about 66% of the graduates rated their speech training as average or above average.

HOW DO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES RATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TOTAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM?

Question

How would you rate the effectiveness of the total high school English language arts program?

STRONG 5 4 AVERAGE 3 2 WEAK 1

Average Point Ratings	Class of 1973	Class of 1975	Class of 1976	Class of 1977	Class of 1978	Class of 1979	COMPOSITE
Graduates who attended college	3.5	3.2	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.4
Graduates who did not attend college	3.1	3.3	3.8	3.8	3.3	3.6	3.5
All graduates	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.6	3.4	3.6	3.4

Percentage of Respondents Who Selected Each Rating

The percentages will total approximately 100% for each of the three groups of graduates.

	Class of 1973					Class of 1975					Class of 1976					Class of 1977					Class of 1978					Class of 1979					COMPOSITE				
	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Graduates who attended college	6	33	28	6	6	6	48	30	12	3	27	30	50	15	3	8	41	36	13	3	14	32	43	9	0	8	57	24	5	5	7	42	36	10	3
Graduates who did not attend college	0	21	68	5	5	4	40	32	20	0	7	64	29	0	0	14	62	17	7	0	10	38	24	19	5	4	52	36	4	0	7	47	33	10	2
All graduates	4	39	43	6	6	5	45	31	16	2	3	38	45	12	2	10	50	28	10	1	12	34	37	12	2	6	55	29	5	3	7	44	35	10	2

Observations

1. Graduates have given a general vote of confidence to the effectiveness of the total English language arts program. The composite rating was 3.4 or slightly above average.

2. About 50% of the graduates rated the program as above average, and 86% of the graduates gave the program an average or above-average rating. Only 2% of the students rated the program as "weak," and 12% felt that the English program was below average.

3. The three most recent graduating classes rated the program slightly higher than did the earlier classes.

4. Although there are some differences among the ratings of those graduates who attended college and those who did not enter college, the overall difference in composite percentages is not meaningful.

5. Since many graduates took the time to respond to the open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire, their reactions and suggestions, as well as the results of the study, will assist the staff in improving the program. The fact that the ratings are slightly better the past three years would appear to justify the time, effort, and money invested in improving the program. A dynamic program must keep pace with the changes taking place in our society and, therefore, in our educational programs.

WHICH AREA OF ENGLISH SHOULD RECEIVE MORE EMPHASIS IN INSTRUCTION?

The subject-matter of English, language arts, or communication skills includes four major skill components: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The development of these skills contributes to the "survival skill" of critical thinking, a necessity for active participation as a responsible citizen of a democratic society. Therefore, although the English curriculum has traditionally assumed the primary responsibility of helping students develop effective communication skills, every other area of the curriculum is equally responsible for developing critical thinkers--citizens who demonstrate effective communication skills.

Through this follow-up survey, our graduates have offered a unique perspective of their own needs: "If I had the opportunity to go through high school again...." For this reason, the staff asked the graduates the following hypothetical question to identify curriculum priorities from the point of view of the graduates themselves:

Question

If you were asked to make a choice, which one of the major areas of English language arts should receive more emphasis in instruction? (Check only ONE item.)

( ) a. Listening

( ) b. Reading/literature

( ) c. Writing/grammar

( ) d. Speaking

( ) e. NONE (All of above were adequate in meeting your needs.)

LISTENING	Class of 1973	Class of 1975	Class of 1976	Class of 1977	Class of 1978	Class of 1979	COMPOSITE
Graduates who attended college	6%	10%	7%	1%	8%	5%	6%
Graduates who did not attend college	6%	8%	7%	10%	3%	9%	7%
All graduates	11%	18%	13%	11%	11%	14%	13%

READING/LITERATURE							
Graduates who attended college	0%	7%	5%	3%	11%	3%	5%
Graduates who did not attend college	6%	5%	3%	6%	3%	5%	5%
All graduates	6%	11%	8%	9%	14%	8%	9%

WRITING/GRAMMAR							
Graduates who attended college	28%	26%	52%	44%	39%	41%	39%
Graduates who did not attend college	13%	11%	5%	6%	14%	15%	11%
All graduates	42%	38%	57%	50%	53%	56%	49%

SPEAKING							
Graduates who attended college	26%	15%	13%	7%	9%	8%	13%
Graduates who did not attend college	8%	10%	7%	10%	5%	8%	8%
All graduates	34%	25%	20%	17%	14%	16%	20%

NONE (All of above were adequate in meeting your needs.)							
Graduates who attended college	2%	3%	0%	0%	3%	5%	2%
Graduates who did not attend college	6%	5%	2%	13%	6%	3%	6%
All graduates	8%	8%	2%	13%	9%	8%	8%

Explanation

The percentage totals for the five choices made by each graduating class are approximately 100%; however, because the percentages were calculated to the nearest full percentage point, the totals for classes and areas sometimes deviate by 1% in the "all graduates" column. For example, the total percentage of the five choices for the Class of 1973 is 101% because the subtotals were carried to the nearest full percentage point. Likewise, some subtotals appear to be in error because of the calculation method used for this report. However, every effort has been made to ensure accuracy and consistency in reporting the findings.

Observations

1. When they were restricted to only one choice, a significantly higher percentage of graduates consistently selected writing/grammar as the area which should receive more emphasis in instruction. About five out of ten graduates selected writing/grammar when they were allowed to make only one choice--one priority. The degree of reliability of their one choice has been increased by their having the alternative of choosing "NONE." In other words, the graduates were asked to make one choice, which could be "NONE." However, only 8% of the graduates selected "NONE," whereas 49% recommended writing/grammar as the area which should receive greater emphasis.

2. As compared with those graduates who did not attend college, a higher percentage of graduates who attended college selected writing/grammar as the area which should receive more emphasis. These results are not surprising because of the difficulty college students have traditionally encountered in jumping one of the early hurdles of their college career: the freshman English courses.

3. Speaking came in as a distant second place to writing, with approximately two out of ten graduates selecting oral communication skills as the area which should receive greater emphasis. As shown earlier in this report, the more recent graduating classes expressed significantly greater confidence in their speech training, the reason for which could be the speech requirement added to the curriculum.

4. The area of listening came in third, with slightly more than one graduate out of ten asking for more emphasis on this skill, the most frequently used skill of the four major communication skills.

5. Of the four skill areas, reading was chosen by the smallest number of graduates as the area which should receive greater emphasis. These results do not imply that graduates consider reading as less important than the other major skill areas, but that the graduates apparently feel that reading need not be given greater emphasis in instruction, as compared with the other major areas. Moreover, it is interesting to note that in an earlier part of this report, the graduates rated reading just slightly above writing (a composite rating of 3.7 in reading, and 3.5 in writing) in terms of how well the graduates were prepared in these two areas. In other words, the graduates expressed a comparable degree of approval of their preparation in both reading and writing skills. However, when given only one choice, they overwhelmingly selected writing skills as the one area in English which should receive more emphasis in instruction.

6. Only 8% of the graduates expressed the opinion that their training in all four skill areas was adequate. A significantly higher percentage of graduates who did not attend college felt that their training was adequate in the four skill areas.

HOW FREQUENTLY DO GRADUATES USE PARTICULAR ENGLISH SKILLS?

A view held by some people is that certain English skills taught in school are seldom used or needed after the students graduate. Likewise, high school graduates often fault the school for not devoting sufficient emphasis to specific English skills required of the graduates in their work, leisure time, and day-to-day activities. Consequently, this questionnaire asked the graduates to indicate how frequently they used a number of English skills presently included in our curriculum.

Question

How frequently do you use the following English skills?

OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	
( )	( )	( )	a. Writing business letters
( )	( )	( )	b. Speaking before groups
( )	( )	( )	c. Giving directions and instructions
( )	( )	( )	d. Reading letters, reports, instructions
( )	( )	( )	e. Viewing television and/or films
( )	( )	( )	f. Writing reports
( )	( )	( )	g. Writing summaries and taking notes
( )	( )	( )	h. Analyzing written materials
( )	( )	( )	i. Writing creatively for myself
( )	( )	( )	j. Writing friendly letters and social notes
( )	( )	( )	k. Participating in group discussions
( )	( )	( )	l. Listening critically
( )	( )	( )	m. Analyzing situations and problems
( )	( )	( )	n. Independent research
( )	( )	( )	o. Using resources
( )	( )	( )	p. Reading for enjoyment
( )	( )	( )	q. Other

a. WRITING BUSINESS LETTERS

	Class of 1973			Class of 1975			Class of 1976			Class of 1977			Class of 1978			Class of 1979			COMPOSITE		
	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER
Graduates who attended college	63%	31%	6%	45%	48%	6%	30%	50%	17%	26%	54%	21%	16%	59%	23%	14%	49%	30%	31%	49%	18%
Graduates who did not attend college	16%	37%	47%	24%	52%	24%	21%	64%	14%	7%	45%	45%	24%	24%	52%	8%	48%	44%	16%	44%	39%
All graduates	45%	33%	22%	36%	50%	14%	28%	53%	17%	18%	50%	31%	18%	48%	32%	11%	48%	35%	25%	48%	26%

b. SPEAKING BEFORE GROUPS

Graduates who attended college	47%	28%	25%	36%	55%	9%	35%	48%	15%	26%	49%	23%	23%	59%	18%	19%	57%	19%	30%	50%	18%
Graduates who did not attend college	0%	32%	68%	8%	20%	72%	7%	57%	36%	21%	34%	41%	14%	33%	48%	12%	24%	64%	11%	32%	56%
All graduates	29%	29%	41%	24%	40%	36%	28%	50%	20%	24%	43%	31%	20%	51%	28%	16%	44%	37%	23%	43%	32%

c. GIVING DIRECTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS

Graduates who attended college	88%	13%	0%	79%	18%	3%	63%	28%	7%	77%	21%	0%	57%	41%	2%	43%	49%	5%	67%	29%	3%
Graduates who did not attend college	63%	32%	5%	60%	32%	4%	71%	14%	7%	55%	34%	7%	62%	38%	0%	68%	32%	0%	62%	32%	4%
All graduates	78%	20%	2%	71%	24%	3%	65%	25%	7%	68%	26%	3%	58%	40%	2%	53%	42%	3%	65%	30%	3%

d. READING LETTERS REPORTS, INSTRUCTIONS	Class of 1973			Class of 1975			Class of 1976			Class of 1977			Class of 1978			Class of 1979			COMPOSITE		
	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER
Graduates who attended college	94%	6%	0%	91%	9%	0%	85%	11%	2%	97%	3%	0%	86%	11%	2%	86%	11%	0%	90%	9%	1%
Graduates who did not attend college	37%	42%	21%	48%	40%	8%	86%	7%	7%	59%	31%	10%	81%	19%	0%	56%	44%	0%	59%	32%	8%
All graduates	73%	20%	8%	72%	22%	3%	85%	10%	3%	81%	15%	4%	85%	14%	2%	74%	24%	0%	79%	17%	3%

e. VIEWING TELEVISION AND/OR FILMS

Graduates who attended college	22%	56%	22%	36%	52%	9%	41%	46%	11%	51%	36%	10%	55%	39%	7%	49%	43%	5%	43%	45%	10%
Graduates who did not attend college	32%	47%	21%	56%	28%	12%	79%	21%	0%	48%	34%	17%	57%	29%	14%	48%	44%	8%	52%	35%	13%
All graduates	25%	53%	22%	45%	41%	10%	50%	40%	8%	50%	35%	13%	55%	35%	9%	48%	44%	6%	47%	42%	11%

f. WRITING REPORTS

Graduates who attended college	44%	50%	6%	55%	30%	15%	72%	20%	7%	78%	16%	5%	55%	32%	14%	81%	14%	3%	64%	28%	9%
Graduates who did not attend college	0%	47%	53%	12%	28%	60%	29%	36%	36%	24%	17%	59%	5%	38%	57%	4%	32%	64%	13%	34%	61%
All graduates	27%	49%	24%	36%	29%	34%	62%	23%	13%	53%	16%	28%	38%	34%	28%	50%	21%	27%	44%	29%	27%

g. WRITING SUMMARIES AND TAKING NOTES	Class of 1973			Class of 1975			Class of 1976			Class of 1977			Class of 1978			Class of 1979			COMPOSITE		
	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER
Graduates who attended college	69%	25%	3%	76%	18%	6%	80%	11%	7%	85%	13%	3%	70%	14%	16%	89%	8%	0%	78%	14%	6%
Graduates who did not attend college	11%	21%	68%	20%	28%	52%	29%	36%	36%	21%	34%	45%	19%	48%	33%	20%	36%	44%	20%	34%	47%
All graduates	47%	24%	27%	52%	22%	26%	68%	17%	13%	57%	22%	21%	54%	25%	22%	61%	19%	18%	57%	21%	21%

h. ANALYZING WRITTEN MATERIALS

Graduates who attended college	63%	31%	3%	67%	33%	0%	59%	28%	11%	74%	21%	5%	50%	39%	11%	68%	30%	0%	63%	30%	6%
Graduates who did not attend college	11%	26%	63%	24%	36%	36%	36%	50%	14%	28%	45%	28%	29%	52%	19%	20%	32%	48%	24%	40%	35%
All graduates	43%	29%	25%	48%	34%	16%	53%	33%	12%	54%	31%	15%	43%	43%	14%	48%	31%	19%	49%	34%	16%

i. WRITING CREATIVELY FOR MYSELF

Graduates who attended college	9%	47%	44%	9%	52%	39%	15%	46%	37%	26%	49%	26%	20%	45%	34%	22%	57%	19%	17%	49%	33%
Graduates who did not attend college	5%	11%	84%	4%	28%	68%	7%	43%	50%	3%	38%	55%	10%	38%	52%	4%	24%	72%	5%	30%	64%
All graduates	8%	33%	59%	7%	41%	52%	13%	45%	40%	16%	44%	38%	17%	43%	40%	15%	44%	40%	13%	42%	44%

j. WRITING FRIENDLY LETTERS AND SOCIAL NOTES

	Class of 1973			Class of 1975			Class of 1976			Class of 1977			Class of 1978			Class of 1979			COMPOSITE		
	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER
Graduates who attended college	59%	34%	6%	48%	39%	12%	54%	30%	13%	67%	28%	5%	64%	34%	2%	76%	19%	3%	61%	31%	7%
Graduates who did not attend college	32%	53%	16%	44%	28%	28%	36%	50%	14%	28%	38%	34%	29%	67%	5%	32%	52%	16%	33%	47%	20%
All graduates	49%	41%	10%	47%	34%	19%	50%	35%	13%	50%	32%	18%	52%	45%	3%	58%	32%	8%	51%	37%	12%

k. PARTICIPATING IN GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Graduates who attended college	59%	28%	13%	79%	18%	0%	63%	28%	7%	59%	41%	0%	50%	50%	0%	65%	32%	0%	62%	34%	3%
Graduates who did not attend college	26%	32%	42%	36%	32%	28%	36%	43%	21%	45%	28%	28%	43%	33%	24%	24%	40%	32%	35%	34%	29%
All graduates	47%	29%	24%	60%	24%	12%	57%	32%	10%	53%	35%	12%	48%	45%	8%	48%	35%	13%	52%	34%	13%

l. LISTENING CRITICALLY

Graduates who attended college	84%	13%	3%	85%	15%	0%	80%	15%	2%	74%	26%	0%	73%	27%	0%	68%	27%	3%	76%	21%	1%
Graduates who did not attend college	37%	32%	32%	68%	24%	8%	64%	21%	14%	59%	41%	0%	62%	38%	0%	60%	36%	4%	59%	33%	8%
All graduates	67%	20%	14%	78%	19%	3%	77%	17%	5%	68%	32%	0%	69%	31%	0%	65%	31%	3%	70%	25%	4%

m. ANALYZING SITUATIONS AND PROBLEMS	Class of 1973			Class of 1975			Class of 1976			Class of 1977			Class of 1978			Class of 1979			COMPOSITE		
	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER
Graduates who attended college	88%	13%	0%	88%	12%	0%	76%	22%	2%	87%	10%	3%	70%	30%	0%	76%	19%	3%	80%	18%	1%
Graduates who did not attend college	63%	21%	16%	72%	12%	16%	79%	14%	7%	66%	31%	3%	71%	29%	0%	76%	24%	0%	71%	23%	7%
All graduates	78%	16%	6%	81%	12%	7%	77%	20%	3%	78%	19%	3%	71%	29%	0%	76%	21%	2%	77%	20%	3%

n. INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

Graduates who attended college	47%	34%	19%	52%	39%	9%	43%	43%	11%	62%	31%	8%	43%	43%	14%	41%	54%	5%	48%	41%	11%
Graduates who did not attend college	26%	32%	42%	28%	36%	36%	29%	43%	29%	24%	41%	34%	0%	67%	33%	16%	40%	44%	20%	43%	37%
All graduates	39%	33%	27%	41%	38%	21%	40%	43%	15%	46%	35%	19%	29%	51%	20%	31%	48%	21%	38%	42%	20%

o. USING RESOURCES

Graduates who attended college	69%	31%	0%	61%	36%	3%	63%	28%	7%	77%	23%	0%	61%	32%	7%	68%	27%	0%	66%	29%	3%
Graduates who did not attend college	21%	47%	32%	32%	44%	24%	43%	43%	14%	24%	48%	24%	0%	86%	10%	28%	52%	20%	24%	53%	21%
All graduates	51%	37%	12%	48%	40%	12%	58%	32%	8%	54%	34%	10%	42%	49%	8%	52%	37%	8%	51%	38%	10%

p. READING FOR ENJOYMENT	Class of 1973			Class of 1975			Class of 1976			Class of 1977			Class of 1978			Class of 1979			COMPOSITE		
	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER
Graduates who attended college	78%	13%	9%	58%	42%	0%	59%	28%	9%	56%	44%	0%	61%	34%	5%	46%	41%	8%	59%	34%	5%
Graduates who did not attend college	47%	37%	16%	48%	48%	4%	64%	21%	14%	38%	55%	7%	38%	57%	5%	28%	48%	24%	42%	47%	11%
All graduates	67%	22%	12%	53%	45%	2%	60%	27%	10%	49%	49%	3%	54%	42%	5%	39%	44%	15%	53%	38%	7%

q. OTHER

Graduates who attended college	13%	3%	3%	6%	9%	3%	9%	7%	0%	13%	0%	3%	5%	5%	2%	0%	3%	0%	7%	4%	2%
Graduates who did not attend college	5%	5%	5%	0%	4%	8%	0%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	5%	5%	0%	16%	12%	4%	6%	7%	5%
All graduates	10%	4%	4%	3%	7%	5%	7%	7%	2%	10%	3%	4%	5%	5%	2%	6%	6%	2%	7%	5%	3%

Explanation

Because of the calculation procedure used in reporting the results in the preceding tables, and because some respondents did not answer particular questions, the total percentages for classes and subgroups often approximate 100%. Also, to clarify the interpretation procedure, the reader should refer to the Class of 1973 and the skill of "Writing business letters." The results indicate that 63% of the graduates who attended college "often" write business letters, and 6% of this subgroup "never" write business letters. However, 47% of the graduates who did not attend college "never" write business letters. In other words, each subgroup total approximates 100%.

Observations

1. Writing business letters is often done by one out of four graduates. Thirty-nine percent of the graduates who have attended college apparently write business letters often, whereas 39% of those graduates who have not attended college never write business letters. With regard to frequency of use of business letter skills, no consistent pattern exists among the subgroups of the different graduating classes.

2. Speaking before groups is a skill more commonly used by graduates who go on to college. Approximately one third of all graduates never speak before a group, and 43% seldom speak before a group.

3. Giving directions and instructions is a skill used often by both subgroups of graduates. Only 3 graduates out of 100 never use this skill.

4. Reading letters, reports, and instructions is a skill used often by 79% of the graduates. In fact, 9 out of 10 graduates who have attended college often use this skill.

5. The general trend over the past seven years points to an increasing number of graduates who are viewing television and/or films. Only 25% of the 1973 graduates often view television/film, and 22% never view media. On the other hand, 48% of the 1979 class often view television/film, and only 11% never view this media. An opposite trend is developing in terms of the number of graduates who are reading for enjoyment (as shown in a later table). In short, while an increasing number of graduates in each successive graduating class are viewing television/film, a decreasing number of graduates in each class are reading for enjoyment. Both of these trends merit further study from the point of view not only of their implications for education and curriculum development, but also of their sociological and psychological implications.

6. Writing reports is a common activity for graduates who have attended college: about 60% of the graduates who attended college often write reports. However, approximately the same percentage of graduates who have not attended college reported that they never write reports.

7. Writing summaries and taking notes are, as one would expect, skills often used by those graduates who attend college. On the other hand, about 80% of the graduates who did not attend college reported that they seldom or never use these skills in their work or activities.

8. The skill of analyzing written materials is often applied in the activities of about half of the graduates. The graduates who did not attend college reported that they use this skill more frequently than the skill of writing summaries and taking notes.

9. Most graduates seldom or never write creatively for themselves. However, a trend has developed in the increasing number of graduates who report that they do some creative writing.

10. About 50% of the graduates reported that they often write friendly letters and social notes. Although the telephone is more commonly used today than a decade ago for social and business purposes, only 1 out of 10 graduates reported that they never write friendly letters or social notes.

11. Participating in group discussions is an activity used often by 52% of our graduates.

12. Listening critically is a skill used often by 70% of our high school graduates. Only 4% of the graduates reported that they never use critical listening skills.

13. Graduates clearly recognize that analyzing situations and problems is an important part of their lives. About 77% of these young adults reported that they often analyze situations and problems, regardless of whether they attended college.

14. Graduates who attended college use independent research skills far more often than their counterparts who do not go on to college. Nearly half of the graduates who have attended college reported that they often use these skills; only 11% of the same subgroup indicated that they never use independent research skills. It is also interesting to note that over 60% of the graduates who did not attend college use independent research skills with varying degrees of frequency, from often to seldom. Only 1 out of 5 graduates who did not attend college reported that they often use this skill.

15. About 51% of the graduates reported that they often use resources. In reference to this skill, the major difference between those graduates who attended college and those who did not is in the degree of use. Those who attended college use resources at least twice as often as their fellow graduates.

16. Reading for enjoyment is one of several objectives of the reading component of the language arts program. Schools fall short of their mission if they produce graduates who can but do not read, unless they are required to do so. Only 53% of the graduates reported that they often read for enjoyment, and 45% indicated that they seldom or never engage in this activity. A trend which is developing and which deserves further study is, on the one hand, the decreasing number of all graduates who reported that they often read for enjoyment, and, on the other hand, the increasing number of graduates who are viewing more television and/or films.

17. A number of graduates apparently use a variety of "Other" English skills in their work and leisure-time activities. In some cases, the respondent took the time to give an example in the open-response section of the questionnaire.

WHAT SUGGESTIONS DO GRADUATES OFFER TO IMPROVE THE HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM?

One of the most important features of this follow-up survey was the opportunity for the graduates to offer suggestions for improving the English program. Though a response was not required, the vast majority of the graduates expressed their reactions and suggestions. The length of written responses ranged from a sentence or two, to a well-developed analysis of the program. Particularly helpful are the specific suggestions and examples for improving the present program, as well as the positive affirmations of support for specific policies, procedures, courses, and methods. A number of graduates cited teachers for their dedication and excellence in teaching.

Because of the nature of the open-ended responses, no effort has been made to report any findings or conclusions. However, because of their importance, the responses have been made available to the staff for their reading and examination. The graduates were assured that the anonymity of their responses would be guarded. Therefore, the reporting procedures for sharing the open responses protect the anonymity of each respondent. Individuals who have an interest in reading these responses should contact the office of the English Language Arts Consultant.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

Although brief interpretations of the findings follow each of the tables in this report, the intent was not to draw definitive conclusions from the data presented. Instead, the staff and administration will use this information in their ongoing process of evaluating and improving the English language arts program.

The implications of some of the findings are quite clear: certain aspects of the English language arts curriculum--as well as the total school curriculum--deserve reexamination. In other cases the graduates support present practices and policies. How the graduates from 1973 to 1979 reacted to the training they received in English will offer direction, insight, and vision as the staff continues to revise and improve the curriculum. That the curriculum will undergo major revision as a result of the findings from this study seems unlikely. However, what this study has produced is a framework for continued self-evaluation by the staff, both collectively and individually.

The graduates have, indeed, performed a service by participating in the evaluative process. The district extends them its sincere appreciation. They should have some sense of satisfaction in the thought that they have helped to improve the English curriculum, through which all students in the Rochester Public Schools will pass before they graduate.

THE DESIGN OF THE SAMPLE

The sampling procedure used in this study is designed to produce an approximation of all graduates from John Marshall High School and Mayo High School within the classes of 1973, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, and 1979. Only a few exceptions had to be made in the procedure because of a deceased graduate and because the addresses of certain graduates could not be found. In these cases the sampling procedure was consistently followed by selecting the next name on the graduate roster for that class.

This type of sampling is based on probability. Forty names of graduates were randomly selected from each of six graduating classes of each high school. Therefore, eighty names were selected from each of six graduating classes--a total of 480 graduates.

The reliability of the sample could be validated only by repeating the same procedure, selecting a different group of 480 graduates, and sending them the same questionnaire. However, in addition to the modified probability sample which is commonly used in studies of this type, several other factors contribute to the reliability of the sample. The percentage of returns from each class and from each school was, overall, reasonably consistent: the composite percentage of return was 76% for each school. Moreover, a 76% return contributes to the reliability of this type of survey, since the questionnaires had to be returned by mail. Every reasonable effort was made to encourage each graduate to return the questionnaire--calling the graduate; calling the parent; sending a second letter and questionnaire; maintaining an anecdotal record for each graduate who was in the sample, in terms of address, date questionnaire was returned, date of each phone call, note on oral response, date second letter was sent, and other pertinent information.

The percentage of return for each year and school, with regard to sex, was also quite consistent: 52% of the respondents were females from each school, and 48% of the respondents were males from each school. Like the overall percentage of returns (76% from each school), the balance of returns from females and males from both schools was as close as could be expected.

The percentage of returns from graduates who attended college and from graduates who did not attend college was closer than what one would normally expect in this type of study. There was only a 1% difference between the two schools: a composite of 63% return from the respondents who attended college, and 37% return from the graduates who did not attend college.

Finally, in terms of their present activity, the graduates who responded to the questionnaire appear to represent a reasonable stratification of "present activities." For example, the percentage of graduates in the military from each class is either 2% or 3%. Likewise, the percentage of graduates who are unemployed was reasonably consistent for all classes. The fluctuation in the "education" activity could be attributed to the fact that the older graduates would have completed their undergraduate education and that the education could be interrupted for a quarter, semester, or year because of various circumstances.

In conclusion, the confidence level of this design, the care taken in obtaining the highest return possible, the percentage of return, the balance between male and female respondents, the balance in percentage of respondents from each high school, and the reasonable degree of diversity in the present activity of the respondents--all of these factors contribute to the reliability of the sample.

COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE

	Class of 1973			Class of 1975			Class of 1976			Class of 1977			Class of 1978			Class of 1979			COMPOSITE		
	J.M.	MAYO	TOTAL	J.M.	MAYO	TOTAL	J.M.	MAYO	TOTAL	J.M.	MAYO	TOTAL	J.M.	MAYO	TOTAL	J.M.	MAYO	TOTAL	J.M.	MAYO	TOTAL
Number of questionnaires sent	40	40	80	40	40	80	40	40	80	40	40	80	40	40	80	40	40	80	240	240	480
Percent of return	60%	68%	64%	73%	73%	73%	73%	78%	75%	85%	85%	85%	88%	75%	81%	78%	78%	78%	76%	76%	76%
Percent of returns from females	50%	56%	53%	59%	34%	47%	41%	68%	55%	62%	38%	50%	54%	63%	58%	45%	52%	48%	52%	52%	52%
Percent of returns from males	50%	44%	47%	41%	66%	53%	59%	32%	46%	38%	62%	50%	46%	37%	42%	55%	48%	52%	48%	48%	48%
*Percent of returns of graduates who went on to college	67%	59%	63%	59%	55%	57%	72%	81%	77%	56%	59%	58%	66%	70%	68%	58%	61%	60%	63%	64%	63%
Percent of returns of graduates who did not attend college	33%	41%	37%	41%	45%	43%	28%	19%	24%	44%	41%	43%	34%	30%	32%	42%	39%	40%	37%	36%	37%
**Percent of returns of graduates who attended vocational/trade school	25%	15%	20%	21%	<1%	21%	7%	10%	9%	18%	12%	15%	14%	13%	14%	0%	6%	3%	14%	13%	13%
***PRESENT ACTIVITY Percent of returns of graduates who are:																					
Employed			76%			72%			37%			49%			54%			56%			57%
Unemployed (looking for work)			8%			2%			10%			10%			6%			10%			8%
Military Service			2%			2%			2%			3%			3%			3%			2%
Homemaker			12%			7%			2%			7%			0%			0%			4%
Education			16%			33%			55%			46%			48%			37%			40%
Other			6%			0%			2%			1%			0%			2%			2%

*For purposes of this survey, if the high school graduate entered a college or university, he or she was counted as a graduate who attended college, regardless of the length of time of enrollment in college.

**The results of this study were analyzed for only two subgroups: those graduates who attended college and those who did not go on to college. However, for purposes of reporting the composition of the sample, the percentage of graduates who attended vocational/trade schools is given. This percentage is included, of course, within the percentage of graduates who did not attend college.

***Since the "present activity" of many graduates involves more than just one activity, the total percentage exceeds 100%. For example, a graduate could be "employed" and be a "homemaker"; or a graduate could be a "homemaker" and also involved in further "education."

APPENDICES

HIGH SCHOOL FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

CODE

As a means of evaluating and improving the senior high school English language arts program in the Rochester Public Schools, we ask that you answer the following questions. We appreciate your assistance.

1. NAME _____ (_____)
(Last) (First) (Middle Initial) (Maiden)

2. PRESENT ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____
(Street or R.R.) (Area Code) (Number)

_____
(City) (State) (Zip Code)

3. YEAR OF GRADUATION FROM HIGH SCHOOL: 197___

4. EDUCATION BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL (Check and complete appropriate item(s).)

Activity	Length of Time
( ) 4a. Vocational/Trade School	___years
( ) 4b. Community College	___years
( ) 4c. College or University	___years
( ) 4d. Apprenticeship	___years
( ) 4e. Other Education _____ (Specify)	

5. PRESENT ACTIVITY (Check appropriate item.)

( ) 5a. Employed
( ) 5b. Unemployed (looking for work)
( ) 5c. Military Service
( ) 5d. Homemaker
( ) 5e. Education
( ) 5f. Other: _____

6. In high school you were required to take English every semester, but you were allowed to choose your courses from a list of many offerings. How did you choose your English elective courses? (Check the appropriate item(s).)

( ) 6a. Need
( ) 6b. Interest
( ) 6c. Level of DIFFICULTY
( ) 6d. Friends were choosing the course
( ) 6e. Recommendation from counselor
( ) 6f. Recommendation from teacher
( ) 6g. Recommendation from parents
( ) 6h. What teacher was teaching the course

7. Based on your own experience, do high school students choose English courses appropriate to their needs and abilities?

( ) 7a. Yes
( ) 7b. No

8. Do you think students should be allowed to choose their English courses?

( ) 8a. Yes
( ) 8b. No

9. How would you rate your high school preparation in each of the following areas? Compare your preparation with that of graduates in your field or activity. (Circle the appropriate number for each item.)	STRONG		AVERAGE		WEAK
9a. Reading	5	4	3	2	1
9b. Writing	5	4	3	2	1
9c. Speaking	5	4	3	2	1
9d. Listening	5	4	3	2	1
9e. Spelling	5	4	3	2	1
9f. Literature	5	4	3	2	1
9g. Grammar and Usage	5	4	3	2	1

10. How well did your high school English courses prepare you in WRITING SKILLS for your post high school education (college, vocational school, on-the-job training) and your present job? 5 4 3 2 1

11. How well did your high school SPEECH course(s) prepare you for your post high school education (college, vocational, on-the-job training) and your present job? 5 4 3 2 1

12. How would you rate the effectiveness of the total high school English language arts program? 5 4 3 2 1

13. If you were asked to make a choice, which one of the major areas of English language arts should receive more emphasis in instruction? (Check only ONE item.)

( ) 13a. Listening

( ) 13b. Reading/literature

( ) 13c. Writing/grammar

( ) 13d. Speaking

( ) 13e. NONE (All of above were adequate in meeting your needs.)

14. How frequently do you use the following English skills?

OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	
( )	( )	( )	14a. Writing business letters
( )	( )	( )	14b. Speaking before groups
( )	( )	( )	14c. Giving directions and instructions
( )	( )	( )	14d. Reading letters, reports, instructions
( )	( )	( )	14e. Viewing television and/or films
( )	( )	( )	14f. Writing reports
( )	( )	( )	14g. Writing summaries and taking notes
( )	( )	( )	14h. Analyzing written materials
( )	( )	( )	14i. Writing creatively for myself
( )	( )	( )	14j. Writing friendly letters and social notes
( )	( )	( )	14k. Participating in group discussions
( )	( )	( )	14l. Listening critically
( )	( )	( )	14m. Analyzing situations and problems
( )	( )	( )	14n. Independent research
( )	( )	( )	14o. Using resources
( )	( )	( )	14p. Reading for enjoyment
( )	( )	( )	14q. Other

15. What would you suggest to improve the high school English language arts program? (Use the backside of page 2 if you need more space.)

MAYO HIGH SCHOOL
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 535
ROCHESTER, MINN. 55901

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL

April 7, 1980

Dear

Mayo High School is evaluating its English language arts program. As one of our graduates, you can help us in this evaluation by completing the enclosed questionnaire and returning it to us. WE NEED YOUR RESPONSE to assure a fair representation of opinions.

Directions:

1. Complete all sections of the questionnaire which are appropriate to you.
2. Print or clearly mark your responses.
3. After completing your questionnaire, simply fold and staple or tape it closed so that the return address and postage stamp can be seen.
4. Then place the questionnaire in the return mail.

Please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your specific responses will be kept confidential and will be used to evaluate and improve the English language arts program. No information about individuals will be released to any person not involved in this study. Also, the identities of individuals providing information will be strictly guarded.

Thank you for cooperating with us. If you have any questions, please call Daniel Moore, 285-8831, Director of Guidance at Mayo High School.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Endersbe
Principal

Enclosure

John Marshall High School
Independent School District No. 535
Rochester, Minnesota 55901

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL

April 7, 1980

Dear

John Marshall High School is evaluating its English language arts program. As one of our graduates, you can help us in this evaluation by completing the enclosed questionnaire and returning it to us. WE NEED YOUR RESPONSE to assure a fair representation of opinions.

Directions:

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2. Print or clearly mark your responses.
3. After completing your questionnaire, simply fold and staple or tape it closed so that the return address and postage stamp can be seen.
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Please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your specific responses will be kept confidential and will be used to evaluate and improve the English language arts program. No information about individuals will be released to any person not involved in this study. Also, the identities of individuals providing information will be strictly guarded.

Thank you for cooperating with us. If you have any questions, please call Paul Austinson, 285-8683, Director of Guidance at John Marshall High School.

Sincerely,

Robert F. Whaley
Principal

Enclosure

87

MAYO HIGH SCHOOL
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 535
ROCHESTER, MINN. 55901

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL

May 7, 1980

Dear

About a month ago you received a letter from us and a questionnaire we asked you to complete. We have not yet received your questionnaire. Your completed questionnaire is needed in order for us to get a complete representation of opinions. This information is important in planning our English language arts program to meet the needs of our current and future students.

Please take a few minutes to complete and return the new copy of the questionnaire enclosed with this letter. After completion, simply fold, staple or tape it closed, and place the questionnaire in the return mail. If you have completed and returned the questionnaire in the last few days, please disregard this letter. Also, if you have any questions about this follow-up, please call Daniel Moore, 285-8831.

We are extremely interested in adding your response to the responses of your classmates. Thank you for cooperating with us.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Endersbe
Principal

Enclosure

John Marshall High School
Independent School District No. 535
Rochester, Minnesota 55901

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL

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Sincerely,

Robert F. Whaley
Principal

Enclosure

PHILOSOPHY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM, 10-12

A. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

The present English Language Arts Program, which has been developed to meet the interests, needs, and abilities of students, evolved from the spiral curriculum developed by the English Language Arts staff in the late 1960's. The process of curriculum development has involved piloting, evaluating, and implementing a variety of quarter, trimester, and semester courses in the English Language Arts: drama, English, humanities, journalism, and speech. The staff will continue to assess and to develop the curriculum.

The staff recognizes the following strengths of this semester elective program:

1. It is student-centered.
2. It capitalizes upon teacher interests and competencies.
3. It provides a spectrum of courses open to sophomores, juniors, and seniors.
4. It reduces needless repetition.
5. It provides broad utilization of materials.
6. It helps students group themselves according to their interests, needs, and abilities.
7. It focuses specifically upon individual language arts skills, with language and writing as integral parts of each elective course.
8. It includes both basic requirements and elective options. With the exception of English Explorations, even the requirements may be met through alternatives.
9. It affords greater opportunity for interpersonal communications.

B. INSTRUCTIONAL PRIORITIES

Although many of the courses appear to be literature oriented, each elective course must include writing and language as integral parts. If choices must be made concerning the use of literary works rather than of writing or language activities, the teacher should develop language arts skills rather than emphasize reading skills. When students exhibit writing or language problems, the teacher should allot time to indicate the problems and to help the students overcome them.

Activities which utilize interpersonal communications such as role-playing small-group discussion, and peer criticism should be employed in all courses.

C. EXPLANATION OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The requirements listed for each course should be considered minimum requirements. However, allowances should be made for those individual students who cannot reasonably meet those requirements. Likewise, allowances should be made for students who can and should be expected to exceed those requirements. The classroom teacher can also establish other course requirements in addition to those listed in the curriculum for each course.

Most courses include as a requirement an oral presentation which may be satisfied by speeches, dramatizations, role-playing, and panel discussion.

All courses include as a requirement a writing experience which may be satisfied by formal composition, evaluation, journals, essay examinations, and creative writing. A variety of writing experiences should be provided in courses which require multiple compositions.

Since the English Language Arts staff is committed to providing exposure to literary heritage as well as contemporary literature, most courses include as a requirement a minimum of at least one reading of a classical/traditional work. These works are indicated by an asterisk (*) in the curriculum guide for each course. The bases used for identifying works as "classical/traditional" literature are the reputation of a particular title and/or author and the general agreement of the English Language Arts staff.

D. WRITTEN COMPOSITIONS FOLDERS

A written composition folder will be provided for each student and will be kept in the English Language Arts classroom. Representative composition assignments should be filed and accessible to the student, providing the opportunity to avoid previous weaknesses and to build on strengths. These assignments should also be available for student-teacher conferences, parent conferences, the department chairperson, the English Language Arts consulant, and the principal.

E. CURRICULUM REVISIONS

Materials may be added to or removed from course outlines at any time. The staff must follow this procedure: the staff member makes the recommendation to the department chairperson, who brings the recommendation to the department. The departmental recommendation is then submitted to the English Language Arts consultant who, with the assistance of the secondary department chairpersons, will make a decision.

Major revisions in curriculum can be made either by a curriculum workshop committee or by a committee appointed by the English Language Arts consultant.

A teacher may propose an additional course. To do so, the individual must submit a fully developed outline following the format of existing courses to the English Language Arts consultant who will call a joint meeting of the English departments to act upon the proposal.

The English Language Arts Department is sensitive to student suggestions and ideas. Curriculum input may be channeled through the student councils as well as through individual English Language Arts teachers.

F. ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Each course outline lists a wide variety of materials and resources available to the staff for accomplishing the objectives and requirements of the course. An updated inventory of the number of copies of each title will be published periodically for the staff. Most of the printed materials are available in multiple copies or classroom sets within each school's IMC. The majority of the films listed can be checked out from the District Media Center; those films not owned locally may be rented. Other audio-visual resources are available in the IMC or the chairperson's office. Since the listing of video tapes for each course is frequently revised, the titles are not included in the course outline but are listed in an inventory provided each teacher.

English Language Arts materials may be ordered through the District Media Center only by an order form bearing the department chairperson's signature.

Since the staff revises the course outlines periodically and updates the materials and resources each year, the format of this curriculum is designed to provide for that ongoing process of revision.

G. SUMMER COURSES

The English Language Arts Department provides credit courses during the summer for students who either fail a course during the school year or wish to enroll in an additional course.

H. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

1. Students must earn three units (six semesters) of English Language Arts credit during grades 10-12.

2. Within the six semesters of English Language Arts, the students must meet three requirements:

   a. They must take English Explorations before enrolling in other English Language Arts courses, with one exception. The exception is that students may take one of the four speech/drama courses before enrolling in English Explorations.

   b. They must pass English Explorations (one semester), which must be taken in grade 10. If they fail this course, they must enroll in it again the following semester; however, they may take an additional English Language Arts course while they are retaking English Explorations.

   c. They must pass one of the following semester speech/drama courses for English Language Arts credit:

1) Fundamentals of Speech (Students who pass this course in grade 9 satisfy the speech/drama requirement.)

2) Fundamentals of Acting

3) Platform Speaking

4) Persuasion and Debate

Students may take only one of the above courses for English Language Arts credit while they are in senior high school.

d. After passing English Explorations, students must pass one of the following semester written composition courses before graduation:

1) Writing Essentials

2) Writing Experiences

3) Advanced Composition

3. Students cannot repeat an English Language Arts course which they have already taken and passed.

4. It is recommended that students consider these guidelines in planning their schedule:

a. Students should complete both the English Explorations and the speech/drama requirements by the end of their sophomore year.

b. By the end of the junior year, students should satisfy their written composition requirement by passing one of the three written composition courses (#2d). College-bound students should take Writing Experiences and/or Advanced Composition.

c. Students who have satisfied their written composition requirement may elect for credit another written composition course if they want additional experience in composition skills.

d. Some courses are offered every semester; other courses are offered only one semester; some courses are offered only every other year.

e. If the enrollment of a course must be limited because of the availability of staff and materials, preference will be given first to seniors, second to juniors, and third to sophomores.

f. Students and their parents or guardians should read carefully the descriptions and requirements for each course. Although the majority of courses receive English Language Arts credit, some courses are electives which do not count as English Language Arts credit.

I. TEACHERS' ROLE IN THE REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

The increasing variety of electives in the English Language Arts Program makes it essential that teachers in the department participate directly in counseling students. To enable students to make more knowledgeable choices when selecting their English Language Arts courses, all English Language Arts teachers will devote sufficient class time for a discussion of the English Language Arts Program. This discussion will take place several weeks prior to the announced date of registration and will include the following:

1. A review of the English Language Arts requirements

2. A review of the various English Language Arts courses

   a. Course descriptions

   b. Course objectives

   c. Course requirements

   d. Course materials

3. Recommenations for placement in composition courses by the English Explorations teachers.

Students will then complete 3" x 5" index cards (sample shown below) on which they will indicate their choices of English Language Arts courses for the next year. Teachers will check their reactions to the students' choices and sign the cards. These cards will be given to the counseling department to verify that the students' choices have been discussed with their English Language Arts instructors.

_____ Present Grade 10 11
(last name) (first name) (circle)

Counselor_____

COURSES: 1st semester _____
2nd semester _____

____ I recommend the above course(s).
____ I recommend the above course(s) with reservation:
_____
_____
_____

____ I do not recommend the above choice(s). A better choice(s) would be: _____

_____
English Language Arts Teacher

J. [1]ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS COURSE OFFERINGS

English

[2]Advanced Composition
Advanced Placement
Alienation
American Literature Sampler (pilot)
American Musical Theater
[4]Contemporary Literature
[4]English Explorations
Exploring the Film
Great Literature
Independent Study
Mass Media
Meeting the Challenge
Mystery, Suspense, and the Supernatural
The Nature of Comedy
Science Fiction
Search for Meaning
Shakespeare
Survival
Utopias and Futuristic Literature
Voices of Dissent
War and Peace
Women in Focus: For Men and Women
World Literature Sampler (pilot)
[2]Writer's Workshop
[2]Writing Essentials
[2]Writing Experiences

[6]Humanities

Humanities II: Man and God
Humanities II: The Measure of Modern Man
Humanities III: Art and Society I
Humanities III: Art and Society II

Journalism

[5]Breaking Into Print
[5]Headlines and Deadlines
[5]Journalists in Action
[5]The Professional Journalist

Speech/Drama

[3]Fundamentals of Acting
[3]Fundamentals of Speech (9-12)
[3]Persuasion and Debate
[3]Platform Speaking

---

[1]All courses are one semester in length except for Advanced Placement, which is a full-year course.
[2]Courses which meet the written composition requirement
[3]Courses which meet the speech/drama requirement
[4]Course required of all tenth graders; must be passed
[5]Elective courses which do not receive English Language Arts credit
[6]Any two semesters of Humanities II or Humanities III or a combination thereof may be used to meet one credit of English elective requirements. It cannot be used to meet the English requirement for English Explorations, composition, or speech.

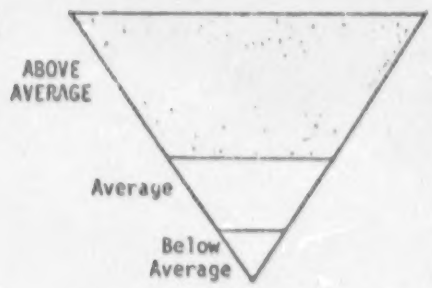
K. GUIDING STUDENTS IN SELECTION OF APPROPRIATE COURSES

Although every course is open to all students, the level of expectation in each course varies. The statement accompanying each chart explains to students and parents the performance level of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills expected of students who are enrolled in particular courses.

> NOTE TO PARENTS: Before you sign the student's registration form, please review this chart and the course descriptions to insure wise choices based upon the student's ability, interest and graduation plans.

DIAGRAM #1 shows that although some students with below-average or average skills enroll in these courses, these offerings are designed primarily for students whose language arts skills are ABOVE AVERAGE.

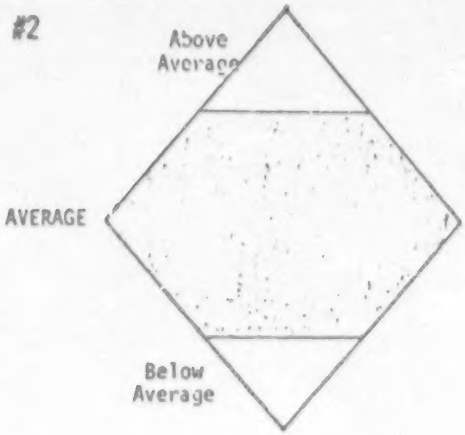
#1



- Advanced Placement Symposium
- Great Literature
- Shakespeare
- Humanities
- Advanced Composition
- Independent Study
- Search for Meaning
- Persuasion and Debate
- Platform Speaking
- Utopias and Futuristic Literature
- Writer's Workshop

DIAGRAM #2 shows that although some students with above-average or below-average skills enroll in these courses, these offerings are designed basically for students whose language arts skills are AVERAGE.

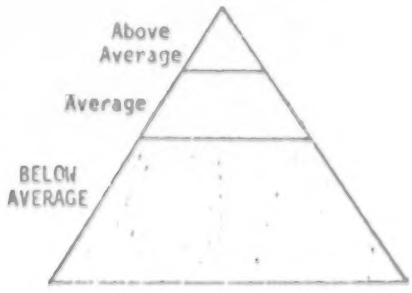
#2



- Alienation
- American Literature Sampler
- American Musical Theater
- Contemporary Literature
- English Explorations
- Exploring the Film
- Mass Media
- Voices of Dissent
- Women in Focus: For Men and Women
- Fundamentals of Acting
- Fundamentals of Speech
- War and Peace
- World Literature Sampler
- Writing Experiences
- Headlines and Deadlines
- Journalist in Action
- The Professional Journalist
- Breaking Into Print

DIAGRAM #3 shows that although some students with above-average or average language arts skills enroll in these courses, these offerings are designed primarily for students whose language arts skills are BELOW AVERAGE.

#3



- Meeting the Challenge
- Mystery, Suspense, and the Supernatural
- The Nature of Comedy
- Writing Essentials
- Science Fiction
- Survival

"END OF DOCUMENT"